

Akron City

September-December 2005

Gifts We Give to Ourselves

All-Star Volunteers

North Hill:
Still City's Melting Pot

Akron, A Trucking Hub
for 75 Years





LeBron James and NBA stars watch the start of the June 25 Bikeathon.

From the Mayor...

The Gift of Land

I hope you've had the chance to take your children or grandchildren to the pull-off along Bath Road in the Cuyahoga Valley in the late spring or early summer, to see the dozens of great blue herons nesting on property purchased by the City many years ago. In Kenmore, we've enjoyed herons at Nesmith Lake and along the Tuscarawas for many years, too.

It's a mystery why the herons return to this same spot each year (maybe they just don't want to build new homes every year), but they remind us of the value of our wilderness, especially when it's so close to the City. On page 10, you'll find the story of how the City — on behalf of our people — has made a gift of this land to the National Park and how we have preserved additional open spaces at our Watershed — as gifts to future generations. The one thing I like to say about land is that they're not making any more of it these days!

The Gift of Time

And if land is precious, so is time. Time taken away from family and relaxation and given to others is what public service is all about. That's why I'm especially proud of our City employees who donate so generously to so many causes. You'll find their stories on pages 6 and 7, and a list of other gifts they have given on page 15.

We suffer a lot of criticism, something that comes with the job of working in public life — but I have to tell you that there's not one City employee I've personally met who doesn't come to work each day with the intention of making life better for someone.

Time on my own schedule is a little more free this summer, after having

spent one year as President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Meeting world leaders such as Mikhail Gorbachev and Kofi Annan were exhilarating experiences, as was speaking to thousands of citizens from all over the world at gatherings in Barcelona, Berlin, Istanbul and Hiroshima.

Akron's Special Gift

When I traveled to these great cities around the world, people often asked me about Akron — they know our automobile racing heritage through Goodyear and Firestone, and they know LeBron James!

LeBron has been a gift to the sports world from Akron, Ohio, and I'm very proud of him for giving back to his hometown as well. To date, there are ten basketball courts all re-surfaced at LeBron's expense by Nike, Inc. I know that he has personally benefitted many families in our city without fanfare or publicity.

All of us were pretty amazed when we saw 200 brand-new Schwinn bikes lined-up at Lock 3 in June,

waiting for their new owners: kids nominated for their good citizenship by the City's recreation centers and the Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority. The bikes were a gift from LeBron to each worthy child, and assembled on short notice by Akron firefighters and bike shop owners who pitched in to make the gift possible.

The first "LeBron's King for Kids Bikeathon" was a success, with hundreds of riders enjoying the streets of Akron on a warm summer day, and it was enjoyed by hundreds more who just came to watch. Proceeds from the event will be given to the Akron Area YMCA and the Urban League by LeBron's James Family Foundation.

The wet spring and hot summer are likely to present us with a beautiful autumn. See you at the Akron Marathon on October 1! 



Donald L. Phlegan



Bikers view the valley from the All-America-Bridge.

Photo by Ken Crisafi

200 bikes donated by
James to Akron kids



Akron City

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Our Cover Photo...

...is **Bruce Ford's** portrait of beautiful blue herons at the rookery on Bath Road, adjacent to the Akron Water Pollution Control Station. Story, page 11.

Tell us what you think by replying to editor@ci.akron.oh.us

Or share your thoughts with the mayor at mayor@ci.akron.oh.us

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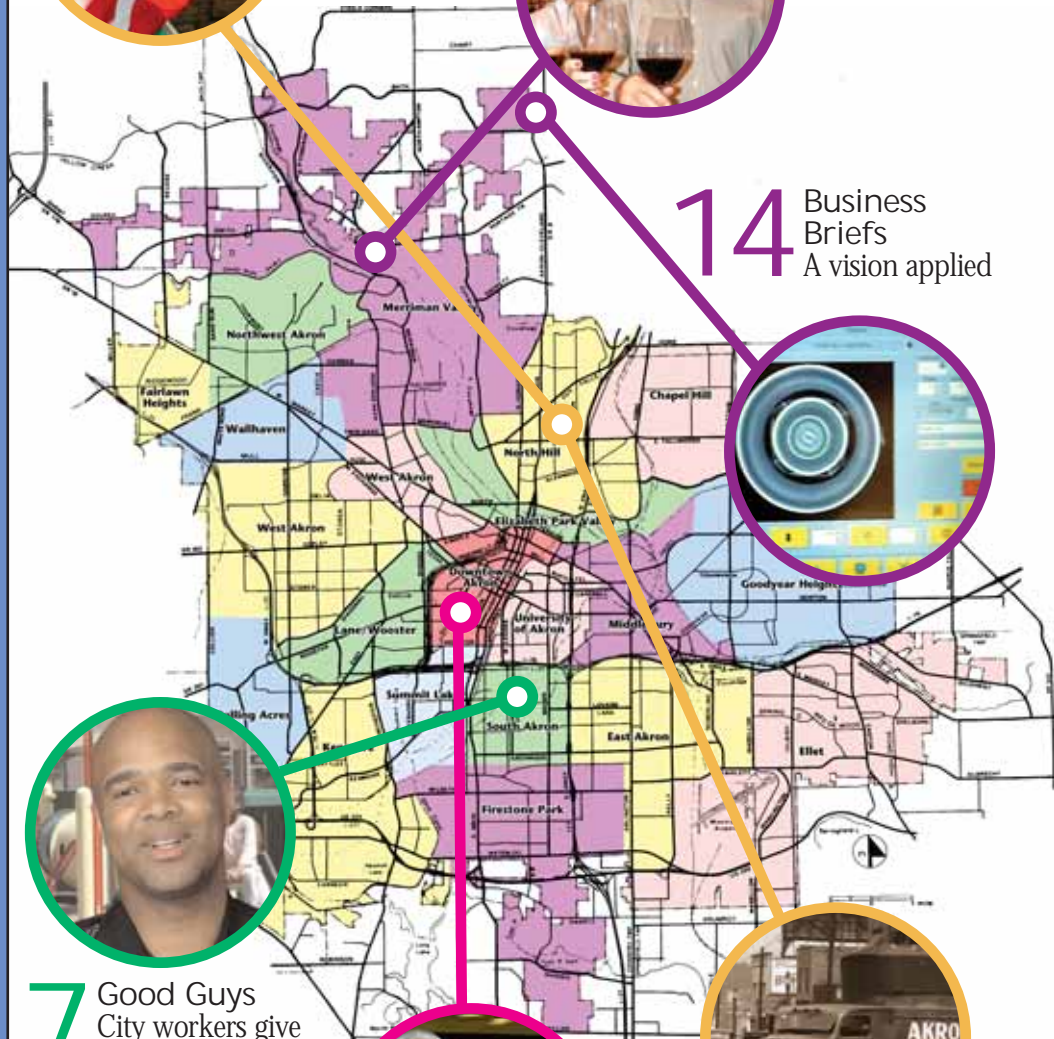
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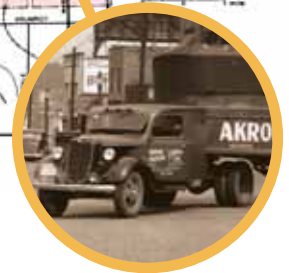
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North Hill

New Residents, Development Revitalize Well-Known Area

By Robert Sberna

For more than a century, North Hill has been a microcosm of Akron's multicultural makeup. Large populations of Italian, Irish, Polish and German immigrants defined the neighborhood's character for many decades. Today, the new residents of North Hill typically come from Mexico, Bosnia and various Asian nations.

Just as North Hill is experiencing a change in its demographics, the area's landscape is undergoing a transformation. Private developers such as Mike Owen are renovating commercial and residential buildings throughout the neighborhood. A new North Hill Branch Library was opened last year, and the City is utilizing state tax credits and federal funds to redevelop the former St. Martha Elementary School into housing units for seniors.

Late this year, groundbreaking is scheduled for the Jennings Community Learning Center, the first of several planned learning centers in Akron that will offer recreation, lifelong learning and other services to residents. The Jennings facility, which will be located near Jennings Middle School, is a collaborative effort between the City and Akron Public Schools (APS). Another community learning center is tentatively planned at the current Findley Academy on Tallmadge Avenue.

"What you're seeing in North Hill is a great example of a sustainable neighborhood in the new millennium," says Owen. "It makes sense to renovate North Hill. The area still has cornerstone businesses, several churches, a hospital and a litany of restaurants that are a regional draw. People come back to North Hill. That makes it an easy neighborhood to resuscitate."


Tom Keith, president of City Management Systems, which manages about 200 rental units in North Hill, says the influx of immigrants from around the world has helped to stabilize the neighborhood. "They have a



An influx of immigrants has helped to stabilize the neighborhood.

good work ethic, and they pay their bills," he notes.

While the housing renovation is helping to ratchet up home values in the neighborhood, Ward 1 Councilman Dan Horrigan says he would like more community-oriented businesses such as restaurants, entertainment venues and retail stores. "We need to partner with businesspeople to attract them to and

retain them in North Hill," he says. "New businesses will contribute to the neighborhood's vibrancy. The message needs to get out that we have affordable building rental rates, a safe environment, and well-maintained properties in North Hill. This area offers some of the best real estate bargains in Summit County." 



Janet Harrington continues a 97-year tradition at J.R. Shoup Co.

Locksmiths Call Service The Key to Their Success

By Robert Sberna

For as long as people have had property to protect, there have been locksmiths. Locking systems have evolved from Egyptian wood crossbeams and vertical beams to today's electronic card readers and keyless touch pads.

But a locksmith's most important product is service, say Jeremy Powell and Janet Harrington.

"When I'm responding to a call from someone who's locked out of the car, I kind of feel like a hero in my white, shining van," says Powell, who works at A-Abra-Cadabra Lock

Service on East Exchange Street. Established in 1950, A-Abra-Cadabra was acquired by Smiley Powell, Jeremy's grandfather, in the late 1960s. Jeremy's father, Tim, now owns it.

Harrington is owner of the J.R. Shoup Co. on West Exchange Street. John R. Shoup


founded the firm in 1908. Harrington and her former husband purchased it in 1988.

"Back then, I didn't know much about locks except how to put the key in the key-way," she says. "But I educated myself about the business. I'm always learning new things."

Harrington expanded services beyond replacing locks and making keys. She brought back safe repair and focused on commercial lock services and residential work.

A-Abra-Cadabra provides a wide range of commercial and

residential lock services. Powell's specialty is replacing programmable auto keys.

"The future of this business is technology," Powell says. "As locksmiths, we have to keep up with the technology to survive." 



Tim Powell (left) and son Jeremy (right) with A-Abra-Cadabra staff

Neighborhoods

Merriman Valley

Papa Joe's Restaurant Is Still a Family Affair

By Robert Sberna



Papa Joe Iacomini has passed on, but his family values and commitment to quality are flourishing at the namesake restaurant he founded on Portage Trail nearly 20 years ago.


Now operated by his daughter, Judy Amato, and her children, Jeff Bruno and Kim Smith, Papa Joe's has expanded to a 320-seat establishment, yet retains a warm ambiance and a casual familiarity among customers and staff.

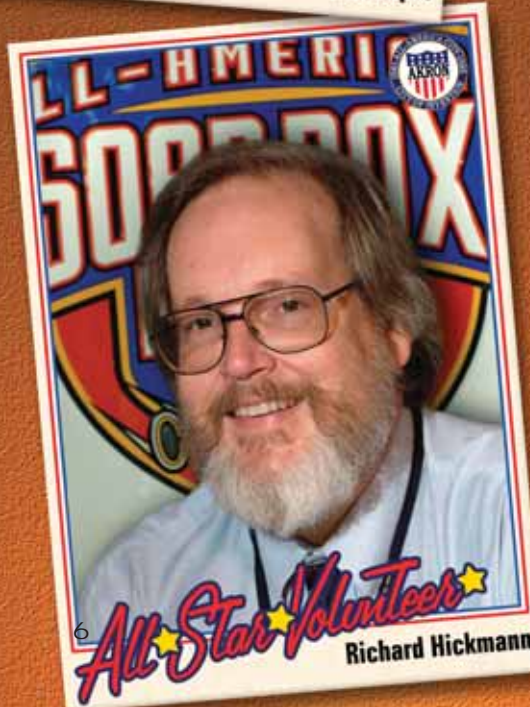
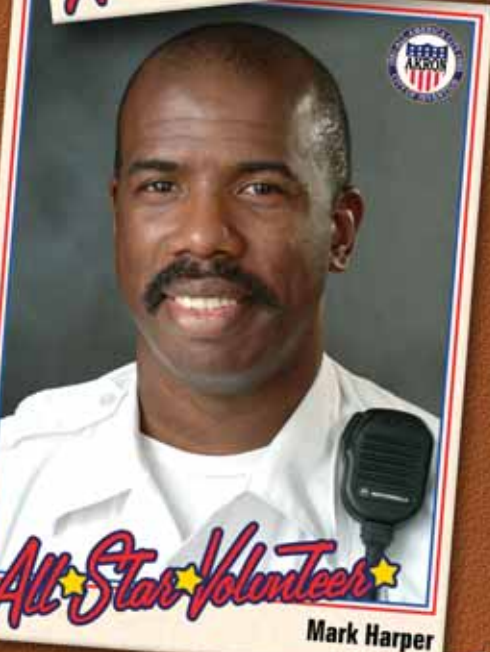
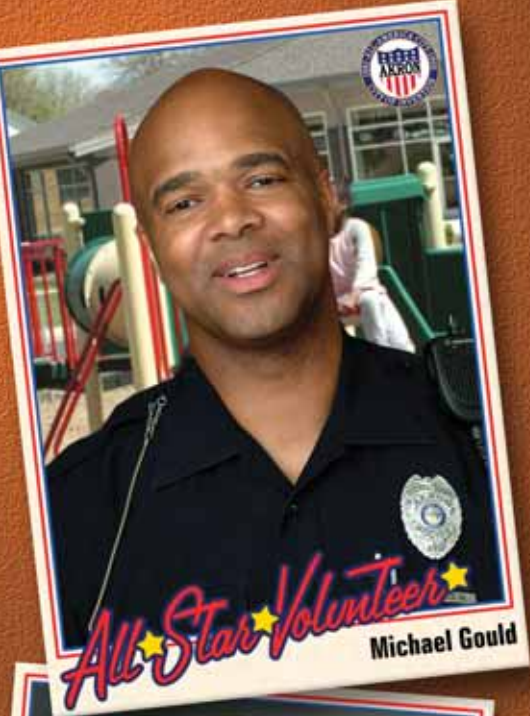
"We're like an upscale family restaurant," says Amato, who says she was "born into the business."

Papa Joe's lineage dates to 1932 when Joe's father, August Iacomini, opened a restaurant in Akron. Over the years, the Iacomini family has operated several other restaurants, including the Lil Joe's Pub in Bath and in Hudson.

"We've always had one restaurant operating in the Akron area since 1932," says Jeff Bruno, who manages day-to-day operations as well as oversees the 1300-label wine shop and carryout deli.

Jeff's sister, Kim, supervises the serving staff. Noting that the restaurant has extremely low employee turnover, she explains: "We're very relationship-oriented with our workers. A lot of them are also going to school or raising families, so we try to accommodate them with our work scheduling."

Known for its traditional Italian dishes, Papa Joe's offers a "comfortable" menu, Bruno says. "You know what you're getting here," he says. "We use the freshest ingredients. Nothing is frozen or pre-made. We push the envelope for value, and our customers appreciate that." 



City Workers Give To Residents

Every employee of the City of Akron goes to work each day to serve the city's residents. When the workday is done, many City employees transform that daily charge into a springboard for individual volunteer efforts — very personal gifts to the community.

Good Guy Off Duty, Too

As a community-oriented policing officer, Michael Gould partners with Akron residents through Block Watch organizations and patrols that target areas of greatest citizen concern. After work, it is mostly young people who benefit from Gould's energy and talents. The 47-year-old police officer mentors them in the PAL (Perkins, Arch, Leggett) Youth Group he has established.

"My mother has a heart for giving; I model myself after her. We have the same passion for children," says Gould. "So many need leadership, guidance — it is most satisfying that I can fill that need."

The Optimist Club of Greater Akron tapped Gould for its 2004 Police Officer of the Year Award. And the 10-year police veteran's work with the residents of the Midtown Apartments in the cleanup of the complex garnered for Gould the 2005 University Park Alliance Award for Community Achievement.

Lt. Charles Brown, commander of Akron Police Department's Community Relations/COPS program, says: "Michael spends long hours after the work day is done on activities and projects that add value to our community."

Healer as well as Hero

Nationwide, experts in burn prevention think highly of Mark Harper, 43, a 20-year veteran of the Akron Fire Department. Here at home, people know Harper as a guy who devotes himself to others' safety on and off duty.

Harper has been an integral person in the burn team at Akron Children's Hospital since 1990. He was instrumental in beginning the

successful Juvenile Firestoppers' Program. And he has been active in the Phoenix Society for burn survivors, which conducts a burn camp for children, among other activities.

Harper also is a member of the Summit County Safe KIDS Coalition, spending many weekends at community events that teach parents safety techniques. You can also often find him in the parking deck at Akron Children's Hospital, installing car seats for staff members. He is the only nationally certified Child Passenger Safety Instructor in Summit County.

Harper has spent the last 14 years working in the department's public education bureau, teaching fire safety to children and adults. The American Burn Association presented Harper with the national Burn Prevention Award.

"There is tremendous satisfaction in knowing that what I do is helping save lives," says Harper.

Dr. Robert L. Klein, was more direct in an e-mail about Harper: "Akron has another hero."

Devoted to the Derby

City employee Richard Hickman II spent vacation time during the last week of July as part of the All-American Soap Box Derby A-Team — calibrating 2,000 race wheels, helping kids get the shells on their cars and ensuring all racers had everything they needed before heats.

"I love building things, meeting interesting people from around the globe and mentoring children. This event lets me do all of this," explains Hickman, 50, who joined the Akron Building Department 22 years ago. Today, he's Chief Plans Examiner for all building projects other than single and multi-family homes.

Hickman has a valued knowledge of construction. But it's Hickman's passion for helping young people that makes him valuable in a completely different way.

His children, eight-year-old Katie and 14-year-old Tommy, both worked with their father on Derby racers. Richard also helps

On And Off The Job By Mark Williamson

other children in his spare time as well, working with youth soccer, Cub Scout Pack 3037 and Boy Scout Troop 77.

Special Kind of Overtime

When it comes to volunteering in one's spare time — be it coaching sports or working with the high school booster club — Building Inspector Chris Ludle, 44, has raised the standard.

City Council Clerk John Valle says of neighbor and friend Ludle: "Building inspectors work from 7:30 in the morning until 4 in the afternoon. I guarantee he's down there [at the ball field] by 4:30, volunteering his 'spare' time."

A landscaper, mechanic and engineer, Ludle manages the Patterson Park sports complex, making certain the field and equipment are ready for play.

"Kids step onto our ball field and are in awe of the condition of it," Ludle says. "It makes me feel great that these children appreciate what we do for them."

Ludle, an inspector since March 2004, is on the clock 40 hours per week and probably volunteers 40 more with North Akron Baseball Association as a coach, board member and director of field and equipment maintenance; St. Anthony Church as a volunteer, coach and athletic director; CYO as coordinator of flag football, baseball and softball tournaments; and St. Vincent-St. Mary High School as part of the Booster Club. Chris is also helping St. Anthony Church build a playground.

Meet a Trio of Givers

Janice Pritt knows her way around the kitchen...and flowers. Since 1992, Janice Pritt has worked in the Akron Health Department, specializing in food service inspection and serving on the board for the Northeast Ohio Partnership for Food Safety Education. But it is Pritt's love for flowers that brought her to the Battered Women's Shelter.

There she teaches the history of Tussie


Mussies. She even teaches how to make them. The Tussie Mussie, a tradition from the 19th Century, is a nosegay of flowers and herbs used to send messages of love, sympathy, faithfulness, charity, hope and friendship.

"I'm a teacher by nature," she says. "I especially love teaching about flowers and how we can enjoy them and use them. It makes people happy, and I love to make people happy."

Don Brown, 42, has been a Water Department employee since 1997, working in customer service. Speaking of service, Brown has 17 years invested in Kenmore Youth Football as a coach, director and league commissioner. He has also been a Kenmore band booster for the past two years, as well as a Kenmore Kiwanis member and a Kenmore Little League coach.

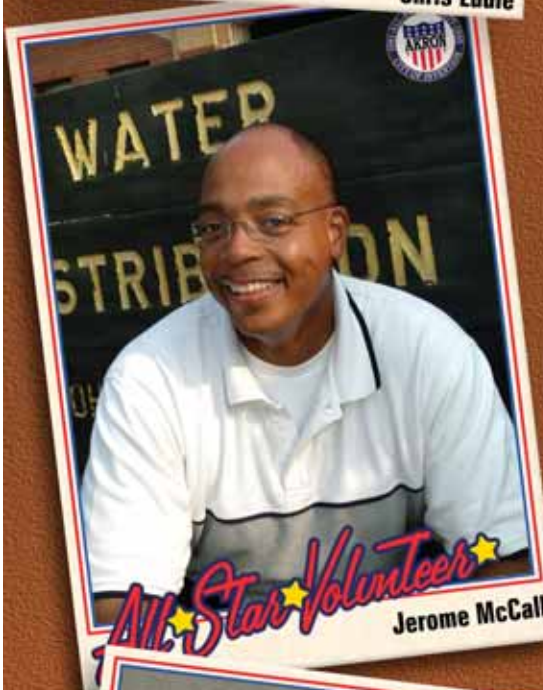
"Lots of kids don't have a positive influence at home...it's evident when I spend any time at these things...many parents simply aren't there. I saw this as a way for my wife Kathy (also a City employee) and me to get involved and help our kids and others," he explains.

Jerome McCall, 45, with the Water Department since 1985, is an industrial-meter foreman. He reads, services and maintains large meters often in deep basements and vaults. McCall also is deeply active at the House of the Lord, where he is a Sunday School teacher for high school students. He sponsors monthly field trips for the members of his Sunday School class. Jerome also teaches team skills and life skills during the outings.

"One of the things that really struck a chord with me was the lack of direction in kids," he says. "It has been reflected in the kids' conduct, which we happen to see in Sunday School class. With the kids I mentor, I like to have a personal relationship by going to their social events, meeting their parents, finding out what they're interested in. Then they had an ear for us when we wanted to talk to them about the facts of life, et cetera." 



Janice Pritt
Chris Ludle



Jerome McCall



Don Brown



Tucker Jolly led the oom-pah-pah's at Cascade Plaza as hundreds of brass bassists gathered for the annual "Tuba Summer."



Hundreds of craftsmen returned to Hardesty Park for the annual Akron Arts Expo in July.

This is



The Akron Family Barbeque celebrated the 4th of July with ribs (above), patriotic costumes (below) and all kinds of music including the Old School Soul stylings of Morris Day & the Time (top right) and the Blues musings of BIG DADDY and the Hoodoo Men (bottom right).
Photos By Joan Hoffman



Lovers amidst the gravestones enjoyed Jazz at Glendale Cemetery this summer, sponsored by West Hill Neighborhood Organization.



Now that's a hole in the ground! Jim Anderson of the City's Engineering Bureau oversees the Rack 40 Project on Cuyahoga Street. The 30' excavation is 200' x 300' and will hold storm water runoff during heavy rains so that sewage can be treated in a timely manner, helping to clean up the Cuyahoga River.



AKRON

The Akron District Marbles Tournament in June attracted 100 young "mibsters," and also attracted national media attention to the Akron Toy Marble Museum at Lock 3 Park.



Mayor Plusquellic addressed the plenary session of the UN-HABITAT World Forum in Barcelona, Spain.

Two leaders of world mayors: Akron's Plusquellic and Joan Clos, Mayor of Barcelona, Spain.

Jerusalem Mayor Euri Lupolianski met Mayor Plusquellic on the USCM's trip to Israel.

Mayor Plusquellic addresses the opening session of the 8th World Congress of Cities, those with a population of one million, in Berlin in May.

As President of the Conference of Mayors, Plusquellic addresses the American Society of Civil Engineers' Annual Meeting in Baltimore.

Akron's Mayor is joined by USCM officials at the monument to the Warsaw Uprising in Poland.

One of the highlights for the Mayor was meeting world leaders past and present, including former Russian president Mikhail Gorbachev.

Akron hosted the leadership of the USCM in October at meetings at the John S. Knight Center.

With Anna Tibajuka, Executive Director of the UN's Biennial Conference examining challenges posed by globalization.

At the Memorial to victims of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima, Mayor Plusquellic is joined in laying a wreath by the Mayor of Saipan Juan Borja Tudela.

Plusquellic was a frequent visitor to Congress during his year's term, seen here with Sen. John McCain (R-AZ).

U.S. Mayors meet with the City Manager of Dublin John Fitzgerald and his senior staff.

Mayor Plusquellic attended the Democratic and Republican National Political Conventions on behalf of the USCM. He addressed delegates in Boston.

With the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Michael Conaghan.

At the United Nations in New York, Mayor Plusquellic introduced Secretary-General Kofi Annan to an international gathering of Mayors for Peace.

Akron Shares Its Mayor with the World

Mayor Don Plusquellic completed his term as President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors in June. The organization of city CEOs praised the mayor for his work in fighting to save important federal assistance programs to cities, and for creating new alliances with groups to collaborate with the nation's mayors, including national organizations of mortgage bankers, architects, and engineers and for enhancing coalitions with the National League of Cities and the National Association

of Counties, each of which recognized Plusquellic's work.

During his year as President, Mayor Plusquellic crossed the Atlantic four times to meet with European and Israeli mayors; addressed an international UN conference in Barcelona, and spoke to 750 of the world's top developers in Istanbul. Akron's mayor also became Vice President of Mayors for Peace at the invitation of the mayor of Hiroshima, Japan. ©

Akron, Allies Protect “the Gift Outright” — Water and Land

By Joe McKenna

Poet Robert Frost once declared that the bond between people and nature is “the gift outright.” The land, Frost wrote, “was ours before we were the land’s.”

Today, the City of Akron maintains that lyrical sense of gifting in the most practical of ways. Over the last several years, the City has given hundreds of acres of land to organizations whose job it is to preserve these wilderness areas for future generations.

“Mayor Plusquellic believes that our water supply is one of our most valued resources,” says Kim Coy, superintendent of Akron’s watershed, located in Geauga and Portage counties. The 207-square-mile resource represents 12 percent of the Upper Cuyahoga River watershed overall. It is a place for recreation and is a staging ground for ecological activities. (A profile of Akron’s watershed appeared in the September-December 2004 issue of *Akron City Magazine*.)

Working with other governmental units and private organizations has “created a synergy,” Coy says. It’s one that pays benefits today and in the future.


Last spring, the City of Akron joined with the Trust for Public Land (TPL) to acquire a conservation easement on 45 acres of prime farmland in Geauga County. The City is contributing the purchase price over a period of years, TPL is handling the details of the transaction, and the property is off the commercial market. The Tim Schaeffer Farm will continue to be operated as a place restricted to agricultural purposes in perpetuity, which in turn protects the green space and keeps clean water flowing into Akron.

This was the third gift of land in which the Trust for Public Land and the City of Akron have collaborated. “Akron continues to demonstrate a forward-thinking approach to drinking

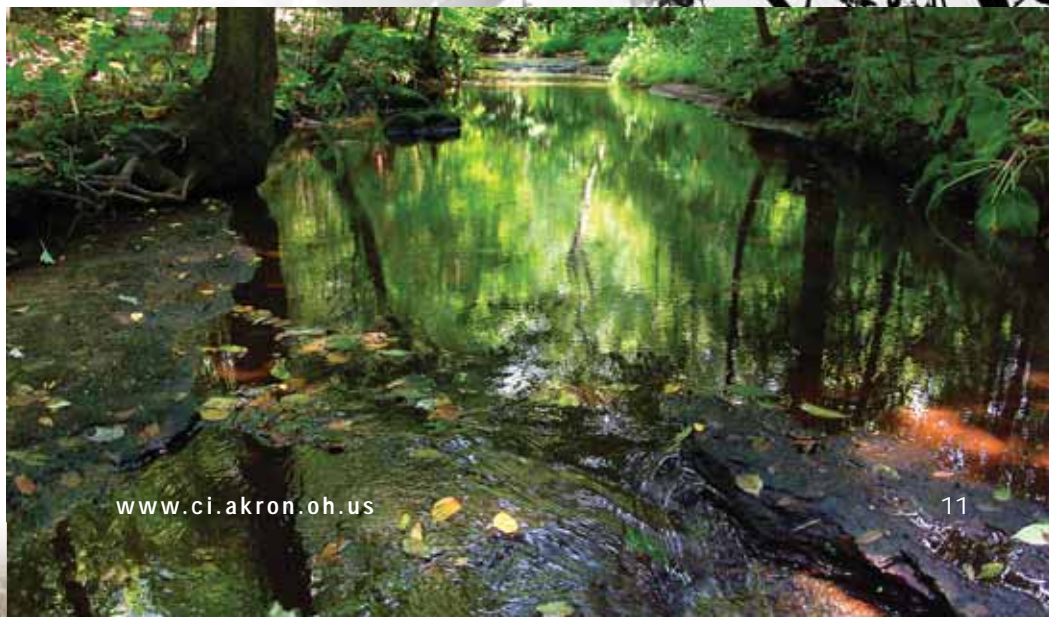
water protection,” says Eddie Dengg, project manager for TPL, a national, non-profit organization committed to ensuring livable communities. “Farmland is being developed rapidly in the area and threatens the rural atmosphere and quality of life in Burton Township.”

In 2003, the City, Township trustees and TPL jointly purchased a 98-acre parcel in Burton Township adjacent to the City’s Watershed, now called “Burton Headwaters.” Near the City’s LaDue Reservoir, it is one of several watershed sites at which the City permits public recreation.

In 2004, TPL facilitated a transfer of 94 acres of undeveloped land owned by the City at its sewage treatment plant site to the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. This land, a prominent entrance into the park, includes an important and popular Cuyahoga River habitat. Those most pleased by the protection of this property have been the actual inhabitants — particularly the blue heron, whose rookery can be found on adjacent city-owned land on Bath Road.

“People come from far and away to witness the beauty and power of the great blue herons,” says Christopher Knopf, director of TPL’s Ohio office. “The protection of this section of the river will allow that interaction between people and the natural world to continue.” 

Father and daughter (left) sit near Bath Road to view heron nest (right). A creek, teeming with wildlife, meanders through the Schaeffer Farm, now protected as part of Akron’s Watershed.





North Main Street, 1937. (Robert Orr Collection, Akron-Summit County Public Library)

History

Two Men and a Trucking Revolution

In 1930s, the Roush Brothers Turned Akron into a Transport Capital

By Dave Lieberth

When a national business magazine recently ranked 300 American cities by their accessibility to transportation routes, it was no surprise that Akron placed among the best for logistics. It's one of the things Akron has been best at for 180 years!

In one century, from 1830 to about 1930, Akron was at the cutting edge of modern transportation, whether by canal boat, railroad or over-the-road trucking.

While the motor carrier industry wasn't born in Akron, it was Akron that became the nation's Motor Transport Capital for most of the last century.

Seventy-five years ago this April, Carroll and Galen Roush — smack-dab in the middle of the Great Depression — launched a trucking company that would be destined to become the largest and most efficient motor carrier in the United States, Roadway Express.

The Roush brothers could haul tires to St. Louis 72 hours ahead of the fastest rail carrier, and would then duplicate

the feat for steel companies in Cleveland, glass companies in Toledo and manufacturers of all sorts from Pittsburgh to Indianapolis, from Cincinnati to Chicago, making Akron the transportation hub of the Midwest.

That the two schoolteachers-turned-entrepreneurs could succeed when America was down on its luck was not what made Akron the Trucking Capital. It was that the Roush brothers' success was copied over and over again by dozens of Akron companies whose names remain part of our history. A.C.E. Transportation, All-States Freight, Bender & Loudon, Bush Van Lines, Dixie-Ohio Express, Motor Cargo, and Yankee Lines were just some of the legendary firms started by Akron men.

When Yellow Corp. acquired Roadway in 2003 for nearly a billion dollars, the combined brand became the largest transportation provider in the U.S., and one of the largest in the world. Today, Roadway maintains a strong presence at its headquarters on Gorge Boulevard in Akron.

Recently, the Akron-Summit County Public Library acquired a valuable collection of photos, papers and memorabilia from the estate of Robert Orr, whose father Oren founded Motor Cargo.


"This cache of papers and photographs is a great 'catch' for our collection as we preserve the history of the community," says Judy James, Director of the Library's Special Collections Division. "Akron's trucking history is intertwined with the history of rubber and tire manufacturing, and is

crucial to understanding the economy of the area in the 20th century."

The Lock 3 History Exhibit now has a special corner for trucking industry history, aided by the work of two former Roadway employees, Jim Ainsley and Mark Shelton, who are diligently at work on creating a permanent exhibit for the motor carrier industry.

"I don't think there's really enough public awareness of the significance that Akron played in the whole history of modern transportation," says Shelton, now the Vice President and Communication Group Manager at FirstMerit Corp. "There's a story to be told in these exhibits and they represent the passion and direction of a whole industry started right here."

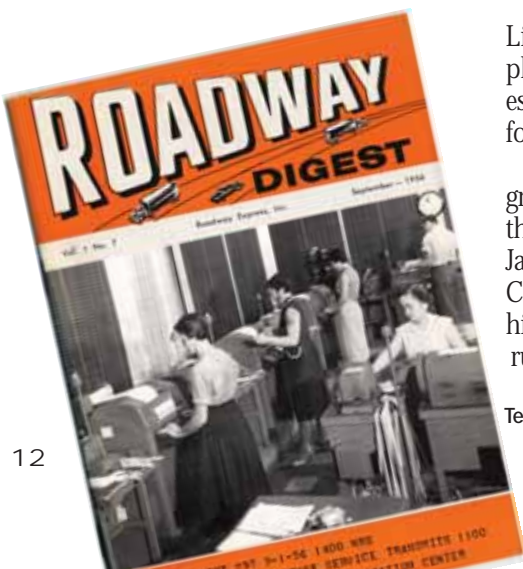
When we look for legacies of Akron's founders — the city's wealthiest families — they are sometime hard to find. But none is more prevalent than the permanent legacy given in perpetuity by the Roush Family of Roadway fame, the G.A.R. Foundation, which is an active and well-endowed benefactor to literally hundreds of community organizations.

I'm surprised when people speak of the Roush legacy as a fish (the gar) or spell out the Foundation's name carefully G-A-R, without knowing its origins. It remembers the husband-wife team who gave so much to the city during their lifetimes, whose good works will live on for decades to come — Galen And Ruth Roush. 

Teletype Room of Roadway Express, 1956, sending and receiving messages to terminals around nation.

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Akron City



Looking North from Northside

By Russ Musarra/Illustration by Chuck Ayers

In the days when North Howard Street was the only way to reach what today is the North Hill neighborhood from downtown, the uphill trip by horse-drawn buggy is said to have taken two-and-a-half hours. By then, one student of history reports, “the horse was too tired to go anywhere else.”

Is it any wonder North Hill wasn't developed until after the Little Cuyahoga River Valley was spanned by a modern viaduct?

That question was in our minds as artist Chuck Ayers and I stood on the south rim of the valley at Furnace and North Main streets and admired the panorama to the north, which will soon be modified by the construction of the Testa Companies' \$30 million Northside Lofts — 63 condominiums and 28 town houses that will dominate the skyline at the north end of downtown Akron.

Our goal was to capture the vista before it is forever changed. We walked along Furnace from North Howard to Summit Street in search of a better vantage point, but settled on our first one, next to Testa's sign, which shows the Northside Lofts as designers envision them.

Looking to our left we could see cars climbing the Howard Street hill with the ease provided by their internal combustion engines.

At the right we saw a few pedestrians walking across the busy Y-shaped All-America Bridge, as Ayers and I did for a feature story in 1987.

Directly below us sprawled the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad station named Northside for the neighborhood created along the short stretch of Main Street that

was isolated when the North Hill Viaduct was demolished in 1978.

And straight ahead loomed the southern edge of North Hill, where Main Street was flanked by Summa Health System's St. Thomas Hospital on the west and Waters Park on the east.

To be honest, the park wasn't really visible from where we stood, but we knew it was beneath the lush foliage, and that is germane to our story. I researched its history when Ayers and I explored North Hill in 1996 and learned that Frank Waters, the Akron lawyer for whom the park is named, loved the view from the bluff and built a mansion there in 1892.

Waters' property was willed to the city when he died in 1934. By then, North Hill was a thriving Akron neighborhood, thanks to the North Hill Viaduct, which had opened on Oct. 12, 1922. But when Waters built his mansion, Main Street ended at Furnace, and North Hill development had just begun, thanks to the extension in 1891 of the Akron Traction Co. trolley line to Chalker's Landing — the intersection of Howard and Cuyahoga Falls Avenue.


Old newspaper clippings provided a treasure trove of information about the viaduct, from efforts leading to its construction to its slow demise as it literally crumbled for 39 years, chunk by chunk, because of poor drainage.

One of the best accounts was that of the late Fran Murphey, who wrote in 1978 about a research paper written by Priscilla M. Harding of Cuyahoga Falls. The paper, titled *Akron's North Hill Viaduct, 1922-1977*, contained the description of the arduous

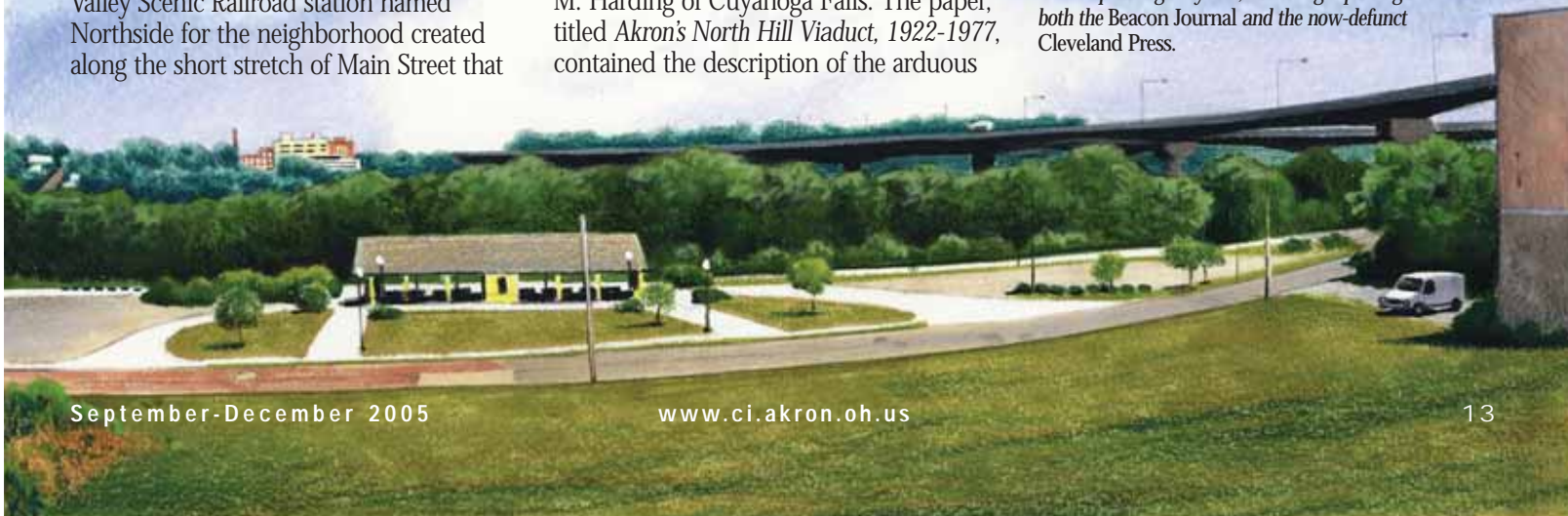
Howard Street hill travel at the start of this story.

“Once a source of pride, a symbol of Akron's growth and progress, the viaduct had become an embarrassment, a source of procrastination,” Harding wrote. “Despite its dilapidated condition, however, when viewed from a distance, the old bridge has a majestic appearance as it sweeps across the valley.”

It was closed in February 1977, and after a big community party on May 12, 1978, the viaduct was demolished in sections between July and December and replaced by the \$25.7 million Y-bridge, which connects Main at the north end with High Street and Broadway at the south.

We found an interesting footnote in an April 11, 1912, newspaper story about a zany, never-acted-upon proposal to span the valley with a commercial building that would have a roadway across its top. The building and its roadway would have stretched across the valley from Furnace to North Howard at Frederick Street. The roadway and sidewalks were to have been 60 feet wide and 3,683 feet long with elevators and lavatories at each end. The cost estimate was \$954,000. 

Artist Chuck Ayers and writer Russ Musarra began their series of essays, based on walks around the community, in March 1987 in the Akron Beacon Journal's Sunday magazine. Ayers, a former Beacon Journal artist and editorial cartoonist, created the comic strip “Crankshaft” with Tom Batiuk. Musarra has combined his interests in history and writing into a career spanning 48 years, including reporting duties at both the Beacon Journal and the now-defunct Cleveland Press.



Business Briefs

Ascot Industrial Park Applied Vision



3,000 beverage cans can be scanned for flaws each minute with Applied Vision's patented robots, made in Akron.

Under the watchful robotic eyes of the patented systems of Applied Vision of Akron, canned products from Anheuser Busch, Armstrong Flooring and Del Monte are examined during production for quality, functionality, appearance and safety.


These are just a few of the global

customers of Applied Vision, whose world headquarters are located in a new, custom-designed building at Ascot Industrial Park. The firm was founded by husband and wife, Amir Novini, President/CEO and Manijeh Novini, Chief Financial Officer.

"This is a great success story, not only for Applied Vision, but for the City of Akron," said Mayor Plusquellic at a May press conference at Ascot. "Our mission is to retain the jobs we have and attract more good jobs. We are very proud of how Akron's investment here at Ascot has been paying off."

"We're happy to have invested in our future by building at Ascot Parkway," said Amir Novini. "The City of Akron provided incentives to keep us in Akron, enabling us to invest more in the design and layout of our building."


Applied Vision has experienced 400-percent revenue growth over the past five years, with 50-percent growth the last fiscal year and the same is forecast for 2005. The number of employees has increased 26-percent since January 2005.

Using the latest touch screen technology, the vision systems are able to scan 3,000 parts per minute. For more information visit www.appliedvision.com. 



Canal Place

Homesite Insurance Group

Mayor Plusquellic joined the brand-new staff of Homesite Insurance Group, headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, at its new national operations center at Canal Place in Downtown Akron. The company provides homeowners and renters with insurance and customer service under contract arrangements with major financing and insurance companies and also direct sales. Homesite has leased 25,000 square feet in the complex, where it plans to employ 200 full-time employees within three years. The Greater Akron Chamber, Team NEO and NAI/Jim Cummins Real Estate Company collaborated with the City, the State, and the University of Akron's Office of Workforce Development to assemble an incentive package that met the company's needs to relocate its operations to Akron. 

Holidayfest Is Coming Back

Holidayfest returns November 25 to Lock 3 Park in Downtown Akron — with more food, more fun and, by popular demand, an ice-skating rink almost double in size to the one used in 2004 (below right).

This year's Chriskindl Market will bring more hand-made crafts from Akron's sister-city of Chemnitz, Germany, including incense-burning apples and pears (right) from Udo Müller's shop in the Erzgebirge Mountains.

Entertainers will include dancers, championship ice-skaters and an authentic German brass band from the Saxony region, where Chemnitz is located. Also returning to *Holidayfest's* new and expanded quarters: German sausage, Annaberg stollen (traditional Christmas cake), potato pancakes and hot, spiced Gluehwein.

From November 25 through December 14, *Holidayfest* will be open 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.



Sunday. From December 15 through December 31, *Holidayfest* will be open daily from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Admission to *Holidayfest* is free. Skate rental is \$2. 





by Russ Musarra

BOOK FAIR MOVING DOWNTOWN

The Akron Antiquarian Book Fair is coming home. The 24th annual fair is April 7-8, 2006 at the John S. Knight Convention Center in downtown Akron. FRANK KLEIN, owner of the Bookseller and a founding member of the Northern Ohio Bibliographic Society (NOBS), which sponsors the event, reports that more than 60 vendors — from Ohio, New York, Michigan, Indiana and Florida — will participate. Call him at 330-865-5831 for more information.

STILL PACKING THEM IN

CINDY BACH, who operates Greystone Hall with her sister CATHY WHITE, has booked MARY FAKTOR to reprise her solo-performance show *Six Stages of Woman* on Sept. 28 in the theater of the hall, at 103 S. High St. in downtown Akron. Bach booked Faktor as luncheon entertainment in April, and the show sold out so quickly that she scheduled a second in July. Bach decided to see if the magic will works the third time. Faktor's recent film credits include *Custody*, filmed in Akron and Mansfield by Akronite ERIC STUYVESANT, and the HARVEY PEKAR biopic *American Splendor*. Call Greystone at 330-761-1950 for details.

BOUQUETS FOR CITY WORKERS

The Summit County Safety Council recently honored two City of Akron workers. Personnel analyst TRACIE D'ANTONIO accepted the Group Safety Award on behalf of supervisors and employees who reduced the City's annual incident rate; Akron Fire Lt. AL BRAGG received the council's 2004 Public Service Safety Award.

Purchasing director PAT ASHBROOK and the Akron Police Department received commendations from the Akron Public Schools — to Ashbrook for coordinating the donation of 161 bicycles to the schools, and to police officers for giving who out

140 helmets to kids and conducting rodeos for the schools. SGT. FRANK WILLIAMS coordinates the Police Department effort.

The Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank has applauded City employees for their combined gift of 1,011 pounds of food and cash donations of \$4,143 in 2004, and the Summit Solid Waste Authority gave kudos to the city for recycling 15,422 pounds of paper in 2004.

EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



The Town Crier tips his hat to the City workers who earned employee-of-the-month honors for March, April and May. Senior water pollution control engineer THOMAS F. SMITH, known among associates as "Captain Kilowatt," has been instrumental in saving the City millions of dollars by implementing energy-saving projects at the wastewater plant. He is a recognized leader among professionals across the state. Tom joined the City as a temporary co-op engineer for the wastewater treatment plant and became a full-time employee in May 1980, the year he was assigned to the new Recycle Energy Systems Facility. He became a senior engineer in 1992. Tom is praised for giving a 110-percent effort and being available day or night. He is respected for his vast knowledge of mechanical equipment. At home, he is a true family man who is involved with his kid's sports teams and enjoys working on cars.

Fire Training Bureau secretary GELIA EVANS (she prefers to be addressed as JUDI) has many responsibilities, including maintaining fire-training records as well as fire-training certification files, initiating




updates and preparing revisions to the fire department operations manual. Judi began her career fire department in June 1992 and was promoted to her

current post October 1996. She enjoys spending time with her daughter and son-in-law, MILISSA and GLENN, and her grandchildren, ELISSA, CHLOEY, TYLER and LOGAN. Hobbies include auctions, shopping and selling on eBay, family genealogy and the Cleveland Browns.

Employee-testing-personnel analyst STACEY DOTY inspires associates with her time management and organization skills. Her work has won praise among the City Administration and the Akron Municipal Court, Akron Public Schools, consultants and community organizations. Stacey joined



the city after receiving a bachelor's degree (summa cum laude) from Kent State University in 1995, and was promoted to her current position in 1999. On her

own time and at her expense, she was certified as a professional in human resources after engaging in training that tested her knowledge and practical experience. Off the job, Stacey enjoys activities with her 18-month-old son, GRAHAM, and husband, CLAYTON, and volunteers on various city committees, such as the Akron Arts Expo and City Picnic. 

KEEP AKRON BEAUTIFUL

Keep Akron Beautiful is looking for property owners who do a great job and inspire others! Send names for the **Beautification Watch Awards** to Keep Akron Beautiful, 850 E. Market Street. Properties to be honored should be litter-free, have well-maintained flowers, shrubs, or trees and be free of weeds. Awards are given to properties that stand out in the neighborhood. Another way that Keep Akron Beautiful takes pride in Akron!



Patrolman Jason McKeel helps one youngster put "safety first" at Akron Family Barbeque.

Photo by Joan Hoffman

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